

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1. (Currently Amended)      An optical fiber gripping device, comprising:  
a sheet of material having first and second members hingedly attached at a first end of each of the members; and

a gripping region that includes first and second gripping portions disposed on first and second inner portions of each of said members, respectively to apply a substantially even distribution of force to an outer perimeter of an optical fiber disposed in said gripping region, wherein the outer perimeter of the optical fiber is softer than the material of the gripping portions.

Claim 2. (Original)      The device of claim 1, wherein the gripping portion comprises a substantially malleable material.

Claim 3. (Original)      The device of claim 1, wherein said gripping region is pre-grooved.

Claim 4. (Original)      The device of claim 1, wherein each of said gripping portions comprises a semicircular shape.

Claim 5. (Original)      The device of claim 1, wherein when said gripping region is in an open position, passage of an optical fiber is provided, and wherein when said gripping region is in an engaged position, each of said gripping portions is disposed on an outer diameter of said optical fiber.

Claim 6. (Original)      The device of claim 5, wherein said outer diameter is from about 120  $\mu\text{m}$  to about 130  $\mu\text{m}$ .

Claim 7. (Original) The device of claim 5, wherein said outer diameter is from about 240  $\mu\text{m}$  to about 260  $\mu\text{m}$ .

Claim 8. (Original) The device of claim 5, wherein said outer diameter is about 900  $\mu\text{m}$  or larger.

Claim 9. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein when said gripping region is in an engaged position, the gripping portions contact about 260 degrees to about 360 degrees of a perimeter of the fiber.

Claim 10. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein the optical fiber comprises a glass core, a glass cladding, and a polymer-based coating affixed to said cladding.

Claim 11. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 1, wherein the outer perimeter of the optical fiber ~~[[has]]~~ comprises a protective coating that is softer than the material of the gripping portions.

Claim 12. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein the sheet of material further comprises at least one slot to define separate clamping zones along a length of said gripping region.

Claim 13. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein said gripping region is adapted to grip two optical fibers, wherein at least one of the fibers being gripped comprises a protective layer that is softer than the material of the gripping portions.

Claim 14. (Original) The optical fiber gripping device of claim 1, wherein said optical fiber gripping device is disposed in a splice device.

Claim 15. (Original) The optical fiber gripping device of claim 1, wherein said optical fiber gripping device is disposed in a connector.

Claim 16. (Original) The optical fiber gripping device of claim 1, wherein said optical fiber gripping device is disposed in a remateable connector.

Claim 17. (Currently Amended) An optical fiber splice, comprising:

a first optical fiber having a first end;

a second optical fiber having a second end; and

a housing to support the first and second ends in contact, ~~wherein said housing applies a substantially even distribution of force to an outer perimeter of at least a portion of the first and second optical fibers~~ wherein said housing comprises

an optical fiber gripping device that includes first and second members hingedly attached at a first end of each of the members; and

a gripping region that includes first and second gripping portions disposed on first and second inner portions of each of said members, respectively to apply said substantially even distribution of force to the outer perimeter of the portions of the first and second optical fibers disposed in said gripping region, wherein the outer perimeter of at least one of the first and second optical fibers is softer than the material of the gripping portions.

Claim 18. (Cancelled)

Claim 19. (Currently Amended) The device of claim ~~[[18]]~~ 17, wherein said gripping region is pre-grooved.

Claim 20. (Currently Amended) The device of claim ~~[[18]]~~ 17, wherein each of said gripping portions comprises a semicircular shape.

Claim 21. (Currently Amended) The optical fiber splice of claim 17, wherein the first fiber ~~further comprises~~ a glass core, a glass cladding layer, and a protective coating affixed to the cladding layer.

Claim 22. (Original) The optical fiber splice of claim 21, wherein the protective coating is a polymer-based coating.

Claim 23. (Currently Amended) The optical fiber splice of claim 17, wherein at least [[on]]  
one fiber is a plastic optical fiber (POF).

Claim 24. (Original) The optical fiber splice of claim 17, wherein at least one fiber is a TECS  
fiber.

Claim 25. (Original) The optical fiber splice of claim 17, wherein at least one of the fibers is a  
glass fiber.

Claims 26-27. (Canceled)